



Indiana Veterans' Affairs Commission
Friday, January 10, 2020 at 1:00 PM
Indiana Government Center South
302 West Washington Street, Conference Room 2
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Commission Meeting Minutes

General Information and Reviews

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call:

- **Present for meeting:** Chairman Steuterman, Dennis Wimer, Kevin Coley, Richard Leirer, Richard Caldwell, Ken Hylton, Colonel Chris Mabis (Designee for BG R. Dale Lyles), and Rep Macer
- **Absent for meeting:** Sen Tomes, Sen Mrvan, Rep Zent
- **Verified Quorum**

Approval of Minutes:

- Quarterly Meeting
Motion to approve October 2019 minutes. Caldwell motion to approve, Hylton seconds.
Motion to approve passed.
- Ad Hoc Meetings
Motion to approve Ad Hoc minutes. Kendall motion to approve, Caldwell seconds.
Motion to approve passed.

Old Business

Chairman Steuterman, MFRF Appeals Process:

- The Office of Administrative Legal Proceedings will not be effective until July 1, 2020.
- All Commissioners received a memo regarding three options for the MFRF appeals process. The Options are:
 1. IDVA Director hears MFRF appeals;
 2. Continue the use of ALJ to hear MFRF appeals; and
 3. Eliminate the use of an ALJ and have a taskforce of the Commission hear appeals.

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- Motion to continue the use of an ALJ from the Natural Resource Commission until July 1, 2020 and then utilize an ALJ from the Office of Administrative Legal Proceeding to hear MFRF appeals and issue non-final orders. The non-final orders will be reviewed/approved by a taskforce of the Commission.
- Motion to approve. Hylton motion to approve, Coley seconds.
- Motion to approve passed.

Gabrielle Owens, Policy Review:

- State Benefit Application Process
Motion to approve. Coley motion to approve, Caldwell second.
Motion to approve passed.

Mike Thompson, Homelessness Grants:

- On October 25, 2019, IDVA released the solicitation for the homelessness grants.
- On December 20, 2019, the solicitation closed.
- IDVA received 24 grant applications, which covered every IHCDA region in Indiana.
- Total of \$2,171,427.53 requested with the average request being \$90,476.15.
- Award and denial letters are scheduled to be sent the week of January 13, 2020.

Gabrielle J. Owens, Consideration of ALJ Recommendations:

- ALJ overruled IDVA concerning a MFRF denial. ALJ directed that IDVA shall pay \$2,500 directly to Wells Fargo. IDVA could not get Wells Fargo to complete the necessary paperwork to become a State of Indiana Vendor.
- IDVA prepared a Stipulation signed by IDVA and the Petitioner. The Stipulation requested an Amended Final Order be issued allowing IDVA to pay Petitioner directly.
- ALJ issued a Non-Final Amended Order.
- Motion to approve Final Order. Wimer motion to approve, Caldwell second.
- Motion to approve passed.

New Business

Kevin Coley, MFRF Rule/Rule Taskforce:

- The MFRF Rule Taskforce meet in person and reviewed the MFRF rule. The MFRF Rules Taskforce agreed upon the following areas of the rule to amend:

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- Clarifying the periods of national conflict;
- Adding detail including time perimeters to the appeal process; and
- Clarifying the definition of “veteran”.
- Clarifying the documentation required to prove military service and type of discharge.
- Military connectedness language can only be changed if the Indiana Code is legislatively changed. This would have a fiscal impact so it would be a topic of consideration for the 2021 legislative session.
- The next meeting of the MFRF Rules Taskforce will be scheduled (tentatively in February 2020).

Gabrielle J. Owens, Policy Review:

- Introduction of the IDVA Policy Framework. The IDVA Policy Frame divides existing and future polices into three areas.
 - Employee policies – Examples include requesting leave, calling off from work, and requesting travel.
 - Internal policies – Examples include the handling of cash, compliance monitoring, and the Commission’s electronic meeting policy.
 - Operational policies – Examples include the use of IDVA electronic signature, Women Veterans operating procedures, and SAA operating procedures,

Gabrielle J. Owens, MFRF Non-Final Orders:

- There were no Non-Final Orders to consider.

Chairman Steuterman, Tuition and Fee Exemption Appeals:

- There were no appeals to consider.

Gabrielle J. Owens, MFRF Requests in Excess of \$2,500:

- There were no requests to consider.

Dennis Wimer, Legislative Update:

- Session has just started.
- IDVA working to review bills.
- Mike Aichele, IDVA Legislative Director has a tracking sheet to see where bills are.
- January 27, 2020 is Military Legislative Day. The event will start at 10:30 a.m.



Dr. Shelley MacDermid-Wadsworth, Director, Military Family Research Institute:

- MFRI created in 1999.
- MFRI gathers data from throughout the world on military families.
- Funded by grants and private philanthropy.
- MFRI Goals:
 - Strengthen military families.
 - Strengthen civilian communities.
 - Generate knowledge about military that can be utilized by governments, educational institutions, and the public.

Public Comment:

Kent Morgan– Veteran Advocate

- Question to Dr. Shelley MacDermid-Wadsworth, MFRI regarding statistics about veteran suicide and the actual cause of death listed on the veterans' death certificates. Morgan asked how many veterans were taking prescription pills and started drinking? Dr. MacDermid-Wadsworth indicated that alcohol may disinhibit a veteran's suicidal thoughts and that the Department of Defense performs detailed psychological autopsies.

Department Reports:

Dennis Wimer, IDVA Update:

- Director Wimer is approaching the end of his first year as Director.
- Completed the hiring of the executive leadership team. The last member of the executive leadership team started on Monday - Joe Devito, IDVA Outreach Director.
- IDVA had nine contractor staff a year ago; there is currently one.
- Building 777 should be ready by the end of February. IDVA and IDOA are working together to select and order furniture for the IDVA offices.

Jim Morrison, Lieutenant Governor's Office:

- Veteran Opportunity Partners has 607 partners; 456 are employers.
- Next Level Veterans is working towards Phase 2.

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- Made 77 base visits; registered approximately 765 military personnel; and had 144 employers participating.
- Relocated 117 veterans and their families to Indiana as of January 1, 2020. Goal is to relocate 5,000.
- Job News USA has expressed interest in participating at the upcoming veteran career fair. The hope is to have employers focus on veterans with special needs and/or prior convicted. Locked in two dates at the Marriott East, Indianapolis for the veteran career fair.

Mike Thompson, Division Reports:

- All division reports were provided to Commissions as pre-reads. There was no discussion or questions.

Next meeting will be at the Indiana Veterans' Home on April 3, 2020. Chairperson Adjourned meeting at 2:58 pm.